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ABSTRACT

Districts are expected to replace upwards of 60 percent of all principals over the next 5 years. It is crucial to provide high-quality preparation programs for the new cohort of principals who will lead schools through the next 15-20 years. This paper describes a variety of such programs. They exhibit features such as clear focus and purpose, curriculum coherence, instructional strategies, length and time structure, program culture and symbols, linkage to state initiatives and program policies, and linkage to organizational history, values, mission, and community. Purpose and quality of professional development for school leaders is also discussed. Case examples of professional development programs are given that illustrate different approaches to training school leaders. Recommendations are to make programs career-oriented, have them communicate quality from every aspect, have the core mission focus on leading schools that promote high-quality learning for all students, address needs of well-trained leaders who want to deepen their skills in a specific area, and make careful, logical use of new technologies. Pedagogy and training strategies should enhance learning and motivation to learn. These values should be part of the culture of the program and given active support. (Contains 10 references.) (RT)

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The Professional Development of Principals: Innovations and Opportunities

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The Professional Development of Principals: Innovations and Opportunities

Introduction

Over the next five years districts are expected to replace upwards of 60 percent of all principals. This new cohort of principals will lead their schools for some 15-20 years, through the first quarter the new century. It is crucial to provide high quality preparation programs for these principals. It is equally important for districts, associations, states, and other organizations to develop and offer carefully designed professional development programs over the careers of these leaders. In this paper I describe a variety of interesting, and at times innovative, professional development programs for principals, and I note curricula, structural arrangements, and culture building features which could enhance learning for these leaders. The descriptions of these programs, which are illustrative rather than comprehensive, should stimulate discussion of the importance of professional development for principals as well as suggest possibilities for the future.

Current Sources of Professional Development for Principals

Currently, many associations, organizations, and groups provide a variety of forms of professional development for school principals in the United States. In designing a professional development program for a district, it will be useful to look at the design of these other offerings. It is also important for those designing professional development to consider them as a potential source of training modules, presenters, and enrichment.

The offerings that are available to principals come from a diverse set of local and national programs:

- A number of national associations such as NASSP, ASCD, NSDC, and NAESP provide a number of workshops, short academies, and longer professional development opportunities.
- State associations of administrators regularly hold yearly conferences and shorter workshops on specific topics in the state.
- Universities also provide a variety of professional development activities. The University of Minnesota holds a summer conference for school leaders. Additionally, Harvard's Principal Center and the Vanderbilt Principals Institute provide several multi-week intensive programs for school principals and other administrators.
- Many of the comprehensive reform programs such as Accelerated Schools, The Coalition for Essential Schools, and the Atlas Project offer multi-day, focused training on implementing their particular program for improvement.
- Several private, not-for-profit organizations offer programs for principal and administrator development. These include programs in Louisville, Kentucky, and others.
- For many years, state departments of public instruction such as those in North Carolina have offered workshops and, at times, longer professional institutes that have focused on particular state needs for leadership. The number of these has increased recently. Similarly, intermediate districts and county offices of education from Pennsylvania to California have been adding leadership programs to their list of opportunities for educators.
- Several major national and state programs have been developed in cooperation with state education agencies, administrators associations, districts, and foundations. These programs include the Gheens Academy, the Mayerson Academy, and the California School

Leadership Academy. These larger programs are located either in a state or in a district and provide locally focused training for principals.

- Several of the federal regional laboratories such as North Central Regional Educational Laboratory have designed and offered institutes and workshops for school leaders. It appears that this set of offerings may increase as the principal shortage continues.
- More recently, for-profit companies have designed and sold training programs for school principals. At times these programs have been offered on-site in the District, while others have been using newer information technologies to reach a national audience. Such programs include the "Requisites of a Leader" program from Compass Technologies.
- Finally, districts around the country are beginning to develop more intensive and extensive leadership institutes and in-service and professional development programs for principals. These include principals' academies in Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee. The most extensive of these programs is CLASS (Chicago Leadership Academies for Supporting Success) in Chicago.

Program Characteristics and Features

Professional development programs for school administrators have varied considerably and have a variety of important characteristics and features (Kelley and Peterson, 2000). Each of these features should be considered to serve the needs of administrators in the design of programs. Some of the features of quality programs include the following:

Clear Focus and Purpose

Many professional development institutes focus on particular managerial or leadership skills needed for administrators to implement high quality curriculum and instructional strategies in their schools. Some of these programs are very instrumental, in that they focus on teaching highly specific skills in implementing a particular program (such as Success for All). Other programs have the purpose of building a broad-based, deep understanding of leadership and its role in school improvement. An additional purpose is providing the opportunity to reflect on new educational trends and on the deeper purposes of education and learning for children in urban settings. Some are also designed to provide personal renewal for school leaders. Finally, an important purpose of district level administrator development is to provide a high quality and continuous flow of effective school leaders to the district's schools. In sum, it is necessary to clearly articulate the purpose of the program and ensure coherence to offerings.

Curriculum Coherence

It is critically important to have coherence and alignment in the curriculum of principal professional development programs. Both within and across programs, curriculum should have an integrated, carefully planned set of topics, skills, and conceptualizations based on a defined sequence of well-considered learning objectives. Additionally, more successful training will occur if there are consistent views of leadership and management embedded in curricula. Finally, developing a consistent language for the programs can enhance learning.

Instructional Strategies

For the most successful learning to occur, professional development for principals should use a variety of strategies that are related to the nature of the material taught and learner needs.

A variety of approaches may include experiential learning, use of newer information technologies, small group work, simulation, videotapes, role-playing, case study, and action research. These can significantly improve the effectiveness of the program. Additionally, personal journaling and self-reflection can deepen leadership skills.

Location

Programs should carefully consider the location and setting of the professional development activities. A professional atmosphere, good food, comfortable ergonomic chairs, and high quality audiovisual equipment can make a significant difference in learning. Providing a top-quality location can enhance learning.

Length and Time Structure

While the most common professional development programs for administrators are one-shot workshops, a more successful approach is to have all-day and multiple-session meetings over the entire year. The short sessions can provide information on smaller topics, but a longer experience with a cohort group can have a greater impact on learning and the development of professional networks in the district. A combination of summer program and school year meetings is a successful approach.

Program Culture and Symbols

Some of the most successful professional development programs for principals develop a strong, positive culture among participants with a clear set of symbols and ceremonies. This involves attention to the development of a shared culture, use of traditions and ceremonies in the training, and attention to the logos and symbols of the program. A strong culture in a professional development program is likely to build commitment and identification with the program and its mission.

Linkage to State Initiatives and Program Policies

Given the number of different programs both states and reform programs are promoting, it seems important to link professional development with those initiatives and approaches. Developing a program that incorporates the language of state and program initiatives can be useful.

Information Technology

Many programs are zealous in using the most current internet-based instruction, videotaped feedback, and computer-based training in programs. While these can provide an extremely important addition to the program, they should only be used when they significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning. They should not be used simply because they are the most fashionable idea around. Nonetheless, the information technologies can provide new approaches to professional development. A program might consider using a combination of internet-based modules for providing information or practice in managerial skills related to budgeting or planning, use streaming video to provide lectures and information to schools, or use CD-ROM based instruction to enhance existing formats.

Linkage to Organizational History, Values, Mission, and Community

A state or district program has the opportunity to develop a strong and meaningful linkage with district values, mission, and communities. District programs, like those in corporations, should address and reinforce:

- The organization's mission,
- The underlying beliefs about what learning is,
- What an educated student looks like,
- Knowledge of the history of the organization,
- Knowledge of approaches to curriculum and instruction that are part of the culture of the district,
- Understanding of the history of union relationships and conflicts,
- Understanding of the managerial systems in the district or state (such as budgeting and personnel), and
- A deep understanding of the district and/or state culture (Kelley and Peterson, 2000; Conger and Benjamin, 1999).

The Purposes of Professional Development for Leaders

In recent studies of leadership development in corporations, the military, and other organizations, Conger and Benjamin (1999) identify four major objectives for leadership education. Those four objectives include:

1. Developing individual leadership effectiveness.
2. Enhancing career transition into leadership positions.
3. Instilling the vision, values, and mission of the organization.
4. Developing skills and knowledge to implement long-term strategic objectives.

These four objectives are relevant for leadership development in programs. A professional development academy could provide an opportunity for building skills and knowledge, enhancing the flow of leaders to the principalship, developing a strong set of values and ethics, and enhancing the ability to implement school improvement strategies. Conger and Benjamin (1999) go on to point out that professional development activities help to build a network of people who can share ideas, hold a common vision for their organizations, and share a commitment to the organization and its improvement. They note also that professional development is a way of imparting specific knowledge that needs to be applied immediately, building "teams of leaders and leaders of teams," and helping to increase the diffusion of leadership throughout the organization. Leadership development, they argue, is a critical aspect of organizational success in any business, industry or setting.

Linking Professional Development with Certification

Where possible, professional development programs for principals should be developed collaboratively with (or at least with awareness of) certification programs at local universities. This is not always possible given the lack of collaboration between these two organizations. Nonetheless, it is useful for professional development institutes to be aware of the types of skills and knowledge, readings and leadership models, and conceptual approaches taken at local universities.

Prior analyses of certification programs have often criticized those programs for lack of rigor, incoherence in curriculum, and poor teaching (Kelley and Peterson, 2000). Nonetheless,

principals have spent many hours in their preparation programs, and this work should be taken into consideration in the design of professional development at the district level. Collaborating with local universities can perhaps enhance the certification program as well as the professional development program.

A professional development program should link to the skills and knowledge of existing certification programs. This may be as simple as identifying the readings and ideas that are in certification programs and mapping them onto their program, or alternately, having some form of pre-assessment of skills and knowledge for those coming in.

Effective Selection Processes

The selection of individuals into a major professional development program is important to success. Attention should be paid not only to the information gained about the individual, but also on the message sent about the program's importance. If selection is too easy or too political, participants will not feel part of a select group or cohort. Programs such as CLASS in Chicago use a combination of assessment approaches including an assessment center, an extensive written application process, and intensive interviews. While the time spent in selection can be extensive, it is important to make it meaningful and useful in the process.

Quality Professional Development for School Leaders

In their article "Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn" (2000), the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) notes the important qualities of professional development for school leaders. Drawing on the Educational Research Services Informed Educator Series (1999) publication "Professional Development for School Principals," the article makes several useful observations about quality programs.

NSDC notes that effective strategies are long-term, carefully planned, and job embedded. Additionally, effective professional development should focus on student achievement and how it is reached. Quality professional development supports reflective practice, provides opportunities to work, discusses, and solves problems with peers. Professional development activities that support these goals also include such activities as peer study groups, support networks, administrator portfolios, journal keeping, team training for school improvement, and the development of professional growth plans for the individual. Finally, NSDC (2000) advocates the use of extensive coaching. Coaching provides ways to change behavior and improve practice in organizations as administrators work with someone who can provide feedback, modeling, and new knowledge. In sum, all of these features of professional development should be considered in designing a program for developing better school principals

Professional Development Programs For Principals: Case Examples

The following sections, describe a number of different professional development programs for principals. These programs vary greatly in the way they train principals. Each provides insights into innovative practices for the professional development of principals.

The Gheens Academy: Louisville, Kentucky

Established in the 1980s as a partnership between the Gheens Foundation and the Jefferson County Public School District, The Gheens Academy provides training for educators in the district. Initially, The Gheens Foundation donated over $4 million to develop the teacher center and begin offering programs. The Academy has expanded its offerings and worked to address new initiatives as they occurred. While most of the work of the Academy focuses on professional development for teachers, some of the programs also provide training for principals.

Coordinated by a principal chosen from among the current principals in the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), the principal's program has several components. The Gheens Leadership Development Center offers workshops, training focused on specific mandates (such as evaluation training for new principals), mentorship opportunities for newly appointed principals, and individual assistance for experienced principals. Academy programs also focus on many current education issues (such as standards-based reform and its implications for curriculum and leadership of schools).

Curriculum

The leadership curriculum is focused on both instructional leadership and general management areas such as time management, parent involvement, community and business partnerships. Special workshops are also provided with the topics based identified by principals and the district. Thus, the offerings, like other programs, include a basic foundation program and special topics.

Structure

For the core program, cohorts of participants meet regularly for the duration of a "strand," which is typically 3-6 weeks. Another strand for aspiring principals lasts 6-8 weeks. The classes meet regularly during that time.

Pedagogy

Information is presented through readings, case study, and group projects with few if any lectures. Program staff is considering incorporating more technology into the curriculum such as a virtual classroom with electronic links to resources and between administrators in the district.

The Gheens Academy programs are also linked with state training programs for new principals, the Kentucky Leadership Academy (KLA). In addition to the participation of new JCPS principals, JCPS has contracted with the KLA to provide training for 35 additional JCPS principals every two years for a two-year program.

Jefferson County Public Schools
Professional Development Programs

In addition to the Gheens Academy, the Jefferson County Public Schools have an extensive professional development program for school leaders. This program has several major components (NSDC, 2000):

1. A 3-day summer institute that includes both principals and teachers. During the institute, teams of principals and teachers examine student performance data and work together to

develop school improvement plans and a yearlong professional development plan for themselves.

2. Regular staff development days for principals that focus on a single area of instruction. Principals meet to learn about a specific area of instruction such as writing standards, and so forth.
3. A cohort group in which principals learn with other principals. In afternoon sessions, principals are divided by their interests into five groups, or cohorts. These cohorts determine for themselves what they want to focus on. Each group has a coach with expertise in the area and can guide and provide feedback during their work.
4. Participants develop personal professional development plans and engage in a peer evaluation process. Principals develop their own professional development plan. Each year one of the three principals in the cohort group receives a summative evaluation of how they are reaching their growth objectives.

The Mayerson Academy: Cincinnati, Ohio

Modeled in part after the Gheens Academy, the Mayerson Academy is a professional development academy that provides services to the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS). It was developed as a joint venture between the school district and local business leaders interested in improving the quality of their public schools. The Academy is an independent not-for-profit organization with its own building, director, board, and staff on leaves from the district. The district contracts with the Academy to provide professional development for teachers and administrators. The building houses state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment, a professional library, well appointed meeting rooms, materials production facilities, and a regular training staff. Most of the Academy's programs are geared toward professional development of teachers, but the academy also provides leadership training in four areas. These include:

The Aspiring Principals' Program

The Aspiring Principals' Program offers a focused professional development program for those who wish to be principals. Participation is strongly encouraged for all aspiring principals in Cincinnati. The program is designed for those who have or are about to receive principal licensure. Involving 20 hours of training, it focuses on the district mission, district culture, administrative structures, and formal expectations concerning work with parents and community. Specifically, the curriculum focuses on:

- Learning the culture and structure of the CPS school system. For this CPS employees provide information about the size, type, organization and diversity of the school district.
- The role and responsibilities of the principalship and the district mission.
- The principal's role in communicating with constituents such as parents, staff and students.

A Monthly Training Program for all CPS principals

The Monthly Training Program for all CPS principals involves 5 hours of training each for 8 months, on topics identified by the district. The principals receive training according to school level. Recent topics have included brain research and the coaching model. Attendance is voluntary and the training is conducted in a traditional workshop format (e.g., no assigned readings and self-contained sessions).

Focus Group Workshops

Focus groups are formed for beginning principals. Once a month, beginning principals are invited to participate in a group discussion session with topics related to survival for first year principals. Mayerson staff often follows up with site visits to the new principals' schools for direct coaching and problem solving. New principals are not required to attend, but most do.

For-Profit Programs

"Requisites of a Leader" Distance Learning Program

Developed initially by the president of the Mayerson Academy and a colleague, the Requisites of a Leader program is a distance learning program offered throughout the United States. The program is televised to 700-800 schools in 30 districts around the country, including rural and urban schools. The program includes interaction with presenters and trained facilitators at each school. It is currently part of a for-profit training company.

Curriculum

The curriculum focuses on five concepts: (1) vision and direction, (2) accountability, (3) selection and development of personnel, (4) providing instructional leadership, and (5) building trust. During each program, knowledge and skills are developed around one of the five leadership "requisites."

Structure

The program is a live television broadcast distributed by satellite. The 90-minute program presents new skills and knowledge, provides time for local facilitators to engage participants in discussions, sharing, and problem solving. Every site is able to email or fax in questions that are answered during the show. Materials, handouts, readings, and outlines of the topics are available online to participants before the show and are distributed by local facilitators for use during the broadcast. District leaders can download the program for use at another time if they cannot view the live broadcast. This appears to be an interesting, evolving model worthy of further consideration for it provides an easily distributed program that can be used in larger districts, in rural areas, or across state lines.

State Programs

Ohio Principal Leadership Academy

The Ohio Principal Leadership Academy (OPLA) is a portfolio driven, job embedded program of leadership development. OPLA is regionally distributed across Ohio with some flexibility in meeting times and use of facilitators. The core of the program for new principals is a two-year program based on the ISLLC standards and the use of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) portfolio based on those standards. Each participant is matched with an experienced administrator during the two years. They work on four "big problems" to develop skills and knowledge of instructional leadership and school improvement. The program for experienced principals is two years with 28 days of professional development (this program is currently being designed).

Professional Development in National Reform Programs

National reform programs have started to incorporate professional development efforts for principals (Peterson, 1995; Kelley and Peterson, 2000). These organizations understand that principals are important to implementing their reform model. In designing professional development, one would want to consider what training principals might be receiving as part of a reform model. The following describe some of these efforts:

- Accelerated Schools supports the needs for training and implementation of the Accelerated Schools model at the site level. Technical assistance people who will be working directly with schools provide an intensive multi-day program for the school.
- The ATLAS Communities Project is developing professional training for district and community teams. This effort brings together teams of teachers, students, principals, parents, central office administrators, board members, and community members for a winter institute to examine critical issues related to systematic approaches of reform through collaboration.
- The Coalition for Essential Schools (CES) supports the professional leadership needs for a small group of principals identified as "Thomson Fellows." They provide a multi-week program of reflection, sharing, learning, and networking, which may be expanded into principal seminars.
- The School Development Program (Comer) provides training for its principals. The program helps principals to understand the structure of the model and to develop skills in working with families and staff.
- Success for All (SFA) provides considerable training to staff and some training for principals. There is some training for principals, but most training is focused on implementation strategies of SFA rather than broader leadership skills.
- Finally, Modern Red School House (MRS) offers principal professional development using a leadership assessment instrument that delineates areas of strength and weakness. The program offers extensive coaching for the school.

National Principals' Academies

Offered by a number of different organizations, principal institutes have been around for twenty years. Some of the most enduring programs began in the 1980s as approaches to leadership development for large groups of principals. Many follow a common format, but each represents a unique approach to working with school leaders. The following sections describe some of the most respected institutes in the country (Peterson, 1995; Kelley and Peterson, 2000).

The Harvard Principals' Center Institutes

Initiated in 1981 by Roland Barth, The Harvard Principals' Academy provides development opportunities for hundreds of school leaders. During the summer there are almost continuous institutes for principals, district teams, superintendents as well as many institutes on special topics or with a particular focus. The core institutes are called "The Art and Craft of the Principalship," "Leadership: An Evolving Vision," and the "Institute for School Leadership," which attract some 120 school leaders from around the world.

During the "Art and Craft of the Principalship" participants engage in a number of activities. The institute is intensive and demanding, but participants build powerful professional

ties to those they meet. Specifically, participants:

- examine critical issues and topics related to leading successful schools,
- read extensively,
- meet in small discussion groups to address topics raised in the larger sessions,
- use case studies to generate dialogue,
- engage frequently in personal writing about leadership and the challenges of creating effective schools for all students,
- address issues of race and gender,
- learn about team building and staff development,
- learn about managing change, and
- address ways of dealing with the complexities of school leadership.

The second institute, "Leadership: An Evolving Vision," is an advanced program on leadership that addresses current issues related to leadership and vision such as:

- transformational learning,
- creating a vision for one's school,
- inclusive education, and
- advanced examination of key topics of the initial institute.

The themes and approaches of these institutes are well liked by participants. Participants spend considerable time in collegial discussion and analysis, writing, and networking. The content and large group sessions are highly dependent on selecting quality presenters. The small group discussions, lead by school principals who have gone through the institute and have demonstrated the ability to lead quality "conversations," are a key ingredient of the institutes.

One useful institute strategy is the daily assessment by staff. Institute staff meets several times during each day to debrief about the large presentations, the flow of discussion, and the needs of participants; fine-tuning and ensuring quality control.

Lasting two weeks in the summer, the "Institute for School Leadership" is designed for leadership teams from districts. These teams usually include principals from districts that are interested in school reform or restructuring. The institute brings in presenters from around the country, including school leaders, consultants, and researchers, who share current thinking and ideas with district teams. Major topics include:

- leadership for change,
- systems thinking,
- diversity and community,
- strategic planning and resource allocation, and
- ways to support personal growth and change.

This institute uses case studies extensively and focuses on the multiple changes necessary to support reform. In addition, there are numerous opportunities to meet in small groups and as district teams to discuss, analyze, and share.

The Principals' Center provides institutes for superintendents, aspiring principals, urban educators and other educational leaders. In addition, a variety of different lecture series, study groups around topics of interest to principals, and short courses are offered over the school year. The Center also has a regular newsletter highlighting the writing of practitioners about problems of practice.

The Vanderbilt International Principals' Institute

The Vanderbilt Institute was established the same year as Harvard's under the leadership of Kent Peterson. The first institute was a four-week course in instructional leadership, school improvement, and effective schools research. Lasting about ten days, it serves approximately 25 leaders, in an intensive, rewarding experience for principals from the US and abroad. The topics addressed include:

- instructional leadership,
- managing change and improvement,
- developing an educational vision for the school, and
- shaping the school culture.

The program uses a mix of pedagogical approaches to engage participants including:

- Problem Based Learning (PBL),
- lecture,
- leadership simulations,
- personal writing, and
- the ITCOT ("In the Center of Things") computer simulation of decision making during school improvement.

In summary, these principal academies provide summer experiences for school leaders from across the world. Their focus is leadership. They do not offer substantial training in administrative skills specific to a state or district, nor do they address the specific culture or history of a given district. Nonetheless, the programs have features that represent interesting ideas for leadership development.

Comprehensive Programs

While some programs meet over their summer, two other programs offer comprehensive approaches to the professional development of principals. The first is the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA) and the second, who adapted aspects of CSLA, is CLASS in Chicago.

California School Leadership Academy

One of the earliest and most successful professional development programs has been serving California school leaders for over a decade. Created in 1985 with state funding, the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA) furnishes carefully crafted professional development programs for principals, school teams, and other administrators. It offers programs statewide, with a central office in Oakland and 12 other regional offices. Although primarily working in the state, CSLA has also provided technical assistance support for the development of programs in Chicago, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Colorado, and Washington State.

The curriculum has drawn extensively from current leadership research and best practices in the development of its program content and pedagogy. The program has evolved from a foundation in the effective schools literature to a current focus on school performance, standards, and powerful learning for all students. Considerable attention is paid to shared leadership and to the principal as an instructional leader in a standards-based system. Programs have a core grounding in curriculum and instruction as well as in moral and ethical leadership issues.

CSLA currently offers three primary programs: Foundation 3.0, School Leadership Team, and Ventures.

Foundation 3.0 Program

Structure

In Foundation 3.0 (the "3.0" derives from software terminology, signifying the developmental and changing knowledge and skill set of the program) aspiring, new and experienced administrators and teacher leaders engage in a 2-3 year program of professional development. This program involves participation in a series of 10 carefully designed and conceptually sequenced seminars culminating in the development of an extensive portfolio. Participants who complete the program are called CSLA Senior Associates.

Curriculum

The core curriculum currently includes the following ten seminars:

- Leading through Vision
- Building a Vision of Powerful Learning
- Re-culturing to Create Powerful Learning
- Assessment in Service of Powerful Learning
- A Thinking, Meaning-Centered Curriculum in Service of Powerful Learning
- Teaching in Service of Powerful Learning
- Creating a Diversity-Sensitive Environment for Powerful Student Learning
- Systems Thinking in Service of Student Learning
- Building Relationships and Communication Structures in Service of Powerful Student Learning
- Shared Vision and Shared Leadership in Service of Powerful Learning

(CSLA, 2000)

Several elective seminars are also available, including:

- Safe and productive environments,
- Professional development for low performing schools,
- School community relationships,
- Leading successful change efforts,
- Curriculum alignment,
- Developing learning communities, and
- Service learning.

Pedagogy

A variety of instructional approaches are used in the seminars, with a combination of constructivist and more traditional learning strategies. Students develop a collection of portfolio evidence of their own vision, current organization and leadership, and change activities.

Program Culture and Symbols

CSLA has developed a powerful professional culture among its some 5000 participants. It has well designed materials and a particular "look and feel" to all its correspondence. It uses traditions and ceremonies to communicate its values and build a sense of community. Each year it holds a "convocation" for graduates of the program inviting back those who were early

participants for keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and time to network. The sense of connection among participants is one of the strongest of any state program.

The School Leadership Team Program

The School Leadership Team Program is designed to build the capacity for teams of leaders to lead schools that will promote student learning. Collaboratively, school leadership teams participate in the implementation of comprehensive restructuring and reform strategies focused on improved student achievement.

Structure

Typical teams include the principal, teachers, staff, parents, community representatives, district office staff, and students (grades 7-12). The program provides 10-15 days of seminars, each approximately 6 hours long, over a 2-3 year period. Team members participate in an equal number of workdays at the school site.

Curriculum

Seminar sessions include topics such as the following:

- Creating a vision of powerful teaching and learning
- Designing a curriculum and assessment in the service of powerful learning
the change process
- Shared decision-making
- High-performance teamwork
- Shaping school culture to support collaboration and continuous improvement
- Working through resistance.

The program takes a continuous improvement approach to the implementation of reform models and specifically trains principals in these skills.

The Ventures Program

The Ventures Program, designed and implemented for experienced principals, is focused on skills and knowledge related to transformational leadership. This is an advanced program and works to extend knowledge learned in the foundation courses.

Structure and Approach

Participants study their own school settings using methods drawn from ethnographic research. Over a three-year period, under the guidance of CSLA facilitators, participants document the transformation of their school cultures, and their own roles as change.

The program is designed in three phases. In phase one, participants define their "theory of action" and their "field of action" and the focus of their change efforts. In phase two, participants begin implementing a transformation strategy in their schools based on their analysis of multiple sets of data. In phase three, participants present an exhibition of their achievement to colleagues. This includes a narrative analysis of the change process in their school and data that tracks.

Other Programs and Activities

CSLA also operates an executive leadership center that provides professional development for superintendents. These programs help superintendents learn how to support change efforts from a standards-based perspective.

Overall, CSLA offers some of the most carefully designed, conceptually integrated, logically sequenced, and reform-focused programs in the country. Its set of training modules, regional structure, and attention to developing leaders, who can implement change efforts in a standards-based setting provide a coherent and powerful collegial culture, make it a well developed professional development package. The program's ability to build a strong network and cohesive professional culture across the state is unique among programs (Peterson, 1995; Kelley and Peterson, 2000).

CLASS: Chicago Leadership Academies for Supporting Success

The Chicago Principals and Administrators Association in cooperation with the Chicago Public Schools provide one of the most comprehensive approaches. Called Chicago Leadership Academies for Supporting Success (CLASS), this set of coordinated programs offers training that is sequenced, in-depth, and continuous. The programs begin with LAUNCH for aspiring principals, move to LIFT for first year principals, IAA for current principals, and the Chicago Academy for School Leaders (CASL) for experienced principals and other administrators. This program was designed to help Chicago principals develop skills and knowledge to work within the governance reform of the 1990s. Each program is described below.

Overarching Conceptual Framework for CLASS

In an effort to enhance the coordination of training a set of standards were developed to guide design. These programs are based upon the following seven **Chicago Standards for Developing School Leaders:**

1. School leadership
2. Parent involvement and community partnerships
3. Creating student-centered learning climates,
4. Professional development and human resource management
5. Instructional leadership: improving teaching and learning
6. School management and daily operations
7. Interpersonal effectiveness.

LAUNCH

The LAUNCH program was developed with foundation and district money to provide a high quality training experience for those aspiring to principalships in Chicago. It is well funded and was carefully designed. The program possesses:

- meaningful selection procedures,
- a long training experience,
- a mix of pedagogical tools,
- well thought-out curriculum,
- intensive internships, and
- an underlying conceptual framework based on the Seven Standards.

Program Structure

LAUNCH has both summer and school year sessions. During the summer, participants attend a five-week summer academy on the Northwestern University campus, part residential to build a sense of community and part non-residential when participants live at home and commute. The program meets in the management school conference center on Lake Michigan, a center that boasts excellent facilities and food, symbolically communicating the importance of the experience. Participants engage in a variety of learning experiences during the summer at the conference center.

During the school year participants engage in an intensive, semester-long paid internship with experienced, carefully screened principals. Additionally, they attend on-going support and training meetings through the Urban Network component with other LAUNCH members.

Selection Process

The selection process for LAUNCH is one of the most extensive and rigorous of any professional development program in the country. Applicants are screened through a rigorous process that includes review of a written application, a face-to-face interview, completion of an assessment center experience, and review of written recommendations. Those who are selected have worked hard to achieve membership. Those who are not selected may reapply the next year.

This type of selection process, when fairly and rigorously applied, can identify committed and qualified candidates, and also help build a sense of community among those who attend LAUNCH.

Curriculum

The program curriculum is based on the Seven Standards. Specifically, the program addresses:

- School leadership. Participants learn about the daily realities and importance of principals. They also learn to apply the Bolman and Deal (1997) Four Frames to leadership challenges. The importance of having a vision is also detailed.
- Parent involvement and community partnerships. Participants learn how to enhance parent involvement, work with their communities, and collaborate with member of the Local School Councils.
- School climate and culture. Participants learn about the importance and features of school culture and climate as well as specific tools and strategies for building student-centered learning climates.
- Professional development and human resource management. Participants learn about school improvement strategies and ways to use professional development to enhance teaching and learning. They also develop skills in working with staff.
- Instructional leadership. Participants learn what it is that principals do as instructional leaders and ways to improve curriculum and instruction through leadership.
- School management and operations. Participants learn about the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) budgeting and operations processes. (These management skills will be extended during their internships as in the LIFT program.)
- Interpersonal effectiveness. Participants throughout the summer work on developing their interpersonal effectiveness and "people skills." They learn how to communicate effectively, how to listen, and how to work as a member of a team.

Pedagogy

LAUNCH uses a wide variety of pedagogies based on learning theory and the nature of the skills or knowledge to be learned. These include:

- Mini-lectures
- Case study (developed specifically for LAUNCH)
- Videotapes
- Simulations
- Small group problem solving
- Role-play
- Computer simulation (ITCOT)
- Group brainstorming
- Creativity exercises
- Reflective writing

Program Culture

The effectiveness of any professional development program is in part derived from the underlying set of norms, values, ceremonies, and symbols. These aspects of program culture build commitment, heighten attention, and foster collegiality (Deal and Peterson, 1998). LAUNCH uses a variety of approaches to build culture including:

- Symbols for the program
- Ceremonies to build a sense of community
- Ceremonies to celebrate hard work and recognize accomplishments
- High quality locations to foster pride
- A consistent vision of leadership to reinforce values
- A rigorous selection process to build a sense of identity
- High quality materials and presenters to reinforce a sense of quality
- Ongoing connections with graduates to foster professional community

LAUNCH is one of the best programs in the country for aspiring principals. Its carefully developed structures, curriculum, and culture provide a strong foundation for new principals.

LIFT

The second major program in the CPAA group focuses on the development and support of first year principals. As they describe it, LIFT is for principals who "want to refine their leadership skills and become more adept at managing the challenges of day-to-day school operations." (CPAA, 2000) Unlike the support and preparation found in typical districts that seldom includes more than basic introductions to system procedures, the Chicago program systematically and intensively provides training, coaching, problem solving, and support. The program components provide a useful model of professional development for first year principals.

Structure

The program offers a variety of learning and sharing experiences over the year including:

- A four day initial orientation
- Three full-day workshops on various topics
- Five over-night retreats that involve day and evening sessions

- Three half-day workshops for learning about a topic in-depth
- Weekly consultations with coaches to discuss and review topics from the workshops and to address problems and issues that emerge in their schools.

Additionally, each principal is assigned a coach who has been carefully selected, trained in coaching techniques, and has committed to a specific set of support activities in a written agreement. The coaches are compensated and have interaction with the program director about their work with the principals.

Curriculum

The workshops and retreats have a defined curriculum based on the Seven Standards and specific to the managerial and procedural tasks of the district, and the mission of CPS. Similar to the work of major corporate leadership programs, LIFT does not assume that university preparation has covered the daily managerial procedures for the district in detail (Conger and Benjamin, 1999). Rather, the district ensures knowledge of its specific budgetary, operational, and contractual aspects.

Culture of the Program.

LIFT provides numerous opportunities to network, build professional friendships, and develop a shared sense of commitment. The program has its own look and feel to materials and activities. Additionally, for overnight retreats, it brings participants to a high quality-training center, the Hickory Ridge Conference Center, for sessions where the food is excellent, the meeting rooms are well designed, and there are recreational opportunities on the grounds.

Illinois Administrators' Academy (IAA)

The IAA is a state-mandated program that is made available to principals and other administrators. There is high demand for the workshops due to the statutory requirements. The program has been a more traditional workshop-based professional development program available in flexible hours for administrators.

Structure

The IAA has a set of workshops totaling 32 clock hours every two years for certified administrators. Senate Bill 1019 requires 70 hours of professional development before applying for a principalship. Generally, those who have not gone through LAUNCH participate in these programs.

Curriculum

The Program provides workshops based on the Seven Standards including: school leadership, parent involvement and community partnerships, creating student-centered learning climates, professional development and human resource management, instructional leadership, improving teaching and learning, school management and daily operations, and interpersonal effectiveness, with 12 hours of training on each standard.

Chicago Academy of School Leadership (CASL)

The Chicago Academy of School Leadership (CASL) was the first major program developed and implemented at CPAA with funding from the district and local foundations. It is an outstanding professional development program for urban principals. Developed with funding from a variety of foundations and the Chicago Public Schools, CASL was designed to improve the quality of leadership in the city. This was particularly important due to the increased importance and responsibilities of school principals following the major restructuring of governance in the school system.

Following an extensive investigation of a number of different approaches, CPAA and CPS decided to develop a program that was modeled after and adapted from the California School Leaders Academy. This meant that a new program could be implemented quickly and that existing materials, structures, and approaches did not have to be completely reinvented. What had been learned at CSLA could be adapted for the specific needs and mission of Chicago schools.

CASL has a carefully planned, sequential curriculum that is provided to cohorts of administrators over two years. A variety of teaching approaches are used based on what is known about adult learning. The program is one of the most well designed and thoughtfully implemented in the country.

Structure

CASL is a two-year program for cohorts of principals, assistant principals, or other administrators grouped by region or citywide. The program includes long-term seminars organized around 11 modules of content that are aligned with the seven standards. Participants make a two-year commitment to the program.

The program begins with a 3-day retreat that is followed by sessions occurring one day a month for a total of about 15 days. Participants learn ideas, practice skills, and develop knowledge that culminates at the end of two years with a presentation of professional portfolios.

Like the other CPAA programs, CASL is based on the Seven Standards. Management and communication skills were added at the request of practitioners.

Curriculum

The curriculum is similar to that found in the California program, but it is unique to the Chicago district. Based on research and best practice related to school leadership, organizational culture, the change process, and other topics, the curriculum addresses most if not all of the major areas effective school leaders need to know and be able to do. The curriculum is embedded in a rich set of attractive, well-designed activities, readings, presentations, videotapes, and materials. The curriculum is as follows:

- Orientation (.5 days)
- Vision (1 day)
- School Culture (2 days)
- Curriculum (2 days)
- ITCOT (leadership computer simulation)(1 day)
- Organizational Development (2 days)
- Assessment (2 days)
- Instruction (2 days)
- Instruction (2 days)

- Professional Development (1.5 days)
- Professional Development Portfolio (.5 days)
- [Additional Technology Module: 5 days]

Pedagogy

Program pedagogy varies considerably depending on the skills or knowledge to be learning. Pedagogical approaches include: mini-lecture, discussion, case study, brainstorming, small group problem solving, simulation (computer and non-computer), role-playing, videotapes, and personal portfolios. The academy has a permanent staff of trainers, but hires outside experts and consultants as well as practicing Chicago administrators.

Program Culture

CASL develops a strong professional culture during the training. There is a conscious effort to build strong professional relationships, develop trust and camaraderie, to have fun while working hard, and to symbolize the importance and quality of the program through symbols and ceremonies. The program has a well-designed logo and attractive materials. In addition, its traditions and ceremonies communicate values and reinforce the professional community that is built during the sessions.

Coordination with Other CLASS Programs

CASL was the first CPAA program, to be followed by LAUNCH, LIFT, and IAA. Early on, it had its own Advisory Council and director. Currently, CASL, like the other programs is subsumed under CLASS. A Senior Executive Director of Leadership Development Programs, Dr. Albert Bertani, heads the program. He and his staff are working to have a "seamless web" of professional development opportunities for CPS administrators.

CASL Coaching Experience

This new program extends the CASL curriculum by providing principals, assistant principals, or other administrators skills and knowledge in forming "collegial, reciprocal relationships in which innovative ideas and insights are shared, learned and applied." (CPAA, 2000) This program helps leaders develop facilitation and leadership skills for collegial problem solving, planning, and to enhancing shared leadership. Following an initial meeting in the fall, participants will attend seven sessions over the year.

Summary and Considerations

School districts in the United States are currently facing a critical shortage of well-trained principals. This is occurring just as many are realizing the central role of principals in the implementation of better teaching practices that will produce increased learning for all students. The design of professional development is complex and requires careful attention to a variety of different components (Peterson, 1995; Kelley and Peterson, 2000; NSDC, 2000). As the case studies above demonstrate there are many different approaches to training school leaders. Nonetheless, there seem several clear and compelling ideas that should be considered.

Specific Considerations in the Design of Professional Development for Principals

In general, programs should take into consideration several issues. First, the programs should be career-staged, with specialized training for aspiring, new, and experienced principals (Kelley and Peterson, 2000). Every aspect of the programs should communicate quality from the location and setting to the materials and presenters. The core mission of the programs should focus on leading schools that promote high quality learning for all students. Selection into the program should use multiple measures, be rigorous and fair. Programs should have well-conceived structures, clear focus, as well as strong culture-building elements.

The programs should be structured to enhance learning. Programs should provide a set of intensive experiences over a significant period of time, combining multi-day retreats with daylong and partial-day experiences. While there is no "one best way" to structure sessions, other programs provide useful models to consider. Programs should be organized over the year to minimize disruption of school activities and principal leadership.

Professional development must address the needs of well-trained school leaders who have completed existing programs but who want to deepen their skills in a specific area. These may involve:

- study groups,
- advanced seminars such as the CASL Coaching Experience,
- reading and discussion groups,
- presentations by current thinkers or expert practitioners,
- attendance at national academies or conferences,
- opportunities to become coaches, facilitators, or trainers themselves.

Programs should make careful, logical use of the newer information technologies. These might include: Internet-based learning; streaming video; online discussions; telephone coaching.

Curriculum should be thoughtfully designed. The curriculum within a program should be thoughtfully designed, sequential, cumulative, and appropriate to the level of knowledge of participants. Curriculum across programs should be coordinated and aligned to enhance learning. Topics being addressed should provide core skills and knowledge that will enhance leadership, but also knowledge and skills related to the specific administrative procedures, contractual requirements, and community characteristics of the district.

Core topics might include (Kelley and Peterson, 2000; NSDC, 2000):

- District vision and values;
- Managerial tasks of the principalship;
- District and State requirements and context;
- Basic Leadership and management skills (e.g., communication, evaluation,
- diversity, interpersonal skills);
- Instructional Leadership;
- Culture Building;
- School Improvement and change;
- Data Analysis;
- Problem Solving and decision making;
- Personal Values and Ethics

Deeper conceptual foundations should be carefully selected. Programs should attempt to have consistent theoretical models across workshops. Coordination with other training should be addressed as well. Programs should attempt to link their early training efforts to certification programs and other experiences to build on what participants may have already learned.

Pedagogy and training strategies should enhance learning and motivation to learn. Pedagogy should be varied, engaging, and use the most current and effective approaches for helping adults, and especially administrators, learn their craft. Programs should use strategies such as case study, group problem solving, role-play, simulation, problem-based learning, videotapes, practice and coaching, computer simulations, journaling, self-reflection, portfolios, and other techniques that are effective with adult learners. Learning should be job-embedded where possible. Programs need to deeply engage the participants in thinking, reflection, analysis, and practice with a strong component of coaching and feedback.

Attention should be paid to the symbols and culture of the program. Programs should build strong cultures among participants to enhance learning, to foster commitment to professional development, and to build strong relationships between these future leaders. Programs should have carefully designed materials, logos, notebooks, and newsletters. The location and setting of the programs should communicate importance, professionalism, and quality. Ceremonies and celebrations should be used to enhance the identification with the program.

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